

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for networking and controlling appliances within a local environment containing a local controller and a local server, each appliance being controllable by

5 a corresponding appliance control module, comprising the steps of:

obtaining an appliance control module for each appliance;

installing on the local server, the obtained appliance control modules;

providing communication between the local server and the appliances; and

10 accessing the local server with the local controller to select one of the installed appliance control modules for controlling the corresponding appliance.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein each appliance has a memory-stored address for providing a location of the corresponding appliance control module, said method further comprising the steps of transmitting the memory-stored address from the appliance to the  
15 local controller, and accessing a remote location using the transmitted address to locate the corresponding appliance control module.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the local controller, local server and each appliance contains a wireless transceiver, and wherein said step of transmitting comprises the step  
20 of wirelessly transmitting.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the memory-stored address is a URL  
Internet address.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said accessing step comprises the step of  
5 connecting to the Internet using the URL to locate the appliance control module.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the local controller and the local server  
comprise an integrally formed wireless communications device.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said wireless communications device  
comprises one of a mobile phone and a personal digital assistant.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein the local controller comprises one of a  
mobile telephone and a personal digital assistant.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said local server comprises a personal  
computer.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the appliances, local server and local  
20 controller are capable of wirelessly communicating with each other using Bluetooth transceivers.

11. The method of claim 2, wherein the appliances, local server and local controller are capable of wirelessly communicating with each other using Bluetooth transceivers.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of accessing further comprises  
5 providing a select user with access to the appliances based on a user identifier.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the local controller is a mobile phone and wherein said step of providing a user with access further comprises using a SIM and PIN associated with the phone as the user identifier.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the local server is a personal computer and wherein said step of providing a user with access further comprises using a personal computer password as the user identifier.

15. The method of claim 2, wherein said step of transferring comprises the step of accessing the remote location comprises transferring the located appliance control module to the local controller and then transferring the appliance control module from the local controller to the local server.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step accessing the local server with the local controller to control a select appliance with a corresponding appliance control module.

5 17. The method of claim 1, wherein the local controller comprises a mobile phone and wherein said accessing step comprises the step of selecting a command on the mobile phone to control a select appliance.

10 18. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of using the local controller to grant a second device authority for accessing the local server.

19. A network for controlling appliances within a local environment containing a local controller and a local server, each appliance being controllable by a corresponding appliance control module, comprising:

15 means for obtaining an appliance control module for each appliance;  
means for installing on the local server, the obtained appliance control modules;  
means for providing communication between the local server and the appliances;  
and  
means for accessing the local server with the local controller to select one of the  
20 installed appliance control modules for controlling the corresponding appliance.

20. The network of claim 19, wherein each appliance has a memory-stored address for providing a location of the corresponding appliance control module, said network further comprising means for transmitting the memory-stored address from the appliance to the local controller, and means for accessing a remote location using the transmitted address to locate the corresponding appliance control module.

21. The network of claim 20, wherein the local controller, local server and each appliance contains a wireless transceiver, and wherein said means for transmitting comprises means for wirelessly transmitting.

22. The network of claim 20, wherein the memory-stored address is a URL Internet address.

23. The network of claim 22, wherein said means for accessing comprises the step of connecting to the Internet using the URL to locate the appliance control module.

24. The network of claim 20, wherein the local controller and the local server comprise an integrally formed wireless communications device.

25. The network of claim 24, wherein said wireless communications device comprises one of a mobile phone and a personal digital assistant.

26. The network of claim 20, wherein the local controller comprises one of a mobile telephone and a personal digital assistant.

5 27. The network of claim 26, wherein said local server comprises a personal computer.

28. The network of claim 19, wherein the appliances, local server and local controller are capable of wirelessly communicating with each other using Bluetooth transceivers.

10 29. The network of claim 20, further comprising means for providing a select user with access to the appliances based on a user identifier.

15 30. The network of claim 29, wherein the local controller is a mobile phone and wherein said means for providing a user with access further comprises using a SIM and PIN associated with the phone as the user identifier.

20 31. The network of claim 19, wherein the local server is a personal computer and wherein said means for providing a user with access further comprises using a personal computer password as the user identifier.

32. The network of claim 19, wherein said means for transferring comprises means for transferring the located appliance control module to the local controller and means for transferring the appliance control module from the local controller to the local server.

5 33. The network of claim 32, wherein the local controller comprises a mobile phone and wherein said means for accessing comprises entering a menu selection on the mobile phone.

34. The network of claim 30, further comprising means for the local controller to grant a second device authority for accessing the local server.

10 35. A network for controlling an appliance contained within a local environment, the appliance being controllable by a corresponding appliance control module and having a memory-stored address for providing a location of the corresponding appliance control module, comprising:

15 a local controller having a wireless transceiver for communicating with the appliance and for receiving the memory-stored address from the appliance, the memory-stored address being used to locate the appliance control module;

20 a local server in communication with said local controller for receiving and storing the located appliance control module.

36. The network of claim 35, wherein the memory-stored address corresponds to a location on a global computer network and wherein at least one of said local controller and local server is capable of communicating with said global computer network.

5 37. The network of claim 35, wherein said local controller is a mobile phone.

38. The network of claim 36, wherein said local controller is a mobile phone.

39. The network of claim 38, wherein said mobile phone is used to access the global computer network to locate the appliance control module and to transmit the appliance control module to said local server.

40. The network of claim 38, wherein said mobile phone, said local server and the appliance comprise Bluetooth transceivers for permitting wireless communication therebetween.